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CARPETS.

THE growth in this country of the great textile industry of carpet manufacture, is a matter of high gratification. The excellence attained in this branch of art and the many and excellent varieties turned out, have rendered us practically independent of foreign importations so far as the general home supply is concerned, this importation having declined in a brief number of years by millions of dollars. At the same time, as carpets are *articles de luxe*, certain foreign makes will always find a market here, as appealing in pattern and texture to different tastes. Our tastes are to be more and more restricted to costly specialties. So far the largest decline as to quantity has been in Brussels and Tapestry Brussels, but the amount of all other descriptions has been affected. This result has not been brought about without strong trade opposition, and the prices of English carpets have been put down in our market to the narrowest margin of profit. Berlin carpets and rugs are very freely imported, imitative of Eastern styles—those of Bokhara, however, defying imitation. The import trade in Asiatic carpets,—the products of traditional skill, and unapproachable by Eastern or Western art in the qualities that give them value both for sightliness and use,—tends, nevertheless, to increase, and prominent dealers in this line of business affirm that it is yet in its infancy. The increase of wealth stimulates to rare acquisitions. There are antique rugs and carpets which will command as much as \$1,500 or \$2,000. The warerooms of some of our dealers in Eastern productions constitute veritable art galleries, and the same may also be affirmed of the large stocks of our home productions, such as Tapestries, Moquettes, Axminster and Wiltons. The Wiltons and the Brussels of the Lowell Carpet Company, the Brussels, ingrain, tapestry and velvet pile of Higgins & Co., the moquettes of Sloan, the super-ingrains and body Brussels of the Hartford Carpet Company, the tapestry carpets of the Crompton Carpet Company and of Alexander Smith & Sons, of Yonkers, the Smyrna carpets and rugs of Joseph Wild & Company, the Smyrna goods of the Bromleys and the varied productions of other firms of Philadelphia—the great seat of manufacture—demonstrate that in makes, patterns and qualities we are not to be excelled. Nearly all the modern improvements in carpet making can be traced to American genius. Of late years important advances have been made in power looms, and on the whole the construction of our carpet machinery is superior to that in use in Europe.

Some reference to the processes of manufacture will be of interest as best showing the peculiarities of leading descriptions, and lines of demarcation between them. In the production of tapestry carpets the colors in each frame are different, some of these being striped or plaited in various hues, as, for instance, in flower patterns. No design would appear to be too elaborate for production in tapestry, even to the most exquisite paintings. The appearance of the tapestry is similar to Brussels, but the manufacture is more simple, each thread being colored separately in spaces with the various shades as they follow each other in the design. Much care is required in spacing the threads and putting them on beam. Whilst in the making of true tapestry carpets some of the frames are striped or “planted” with various colors, when the design requires it as in flower patterns, each frame having different colors, in the imitative

tapestry carpets, for which there is always a good demand, the material is woven plain by steam power, and afterward printed by the same agency. It is the peculiarity of tapestry carpets that they are unlimited as to shades of color, so that the most elaborate designs may be executed. Axminster carpets and rugs are made by knotting on to a vertically placed warp the yarn which is to form the surface and pattern. Tournay velvet carpets, otherwise known as velvet carpets, have the same application as Brussels or tapestry, except in the pile being cut instead of being left on the thread. The loom is so arranged as not only to weave in the tufts but to cut them with remarkable celerity. In warp carpets the pattern is printed. Moquette carpets, made similar to the French, Wilton or velvet pile and Brussels carpet, are all woven on the same principle—the dyed threads being arranged according to the pattern, the only difference being that the pile, though drawn out, is not knife cut.

Whilst in the modern make of carpets irregularity in color or web is regarded as an imperfection by the trade, it is otherwise with Eastern carpets; indeed, there is no absolute uniformity in

and it is for manufacturers to discern in advance the tendency of the public taste. The present patterns of carpets are of an all-over description, without central figures. Mechanical skill has been unremitting in cheapening the cost and increasing the production of carpets. The extension of sales necessarily largely depends on manufacturers bringing out attractive designs of a subordinate character. For certain accepted patterns of old standing there is a constant demand, but periodic novelties are the rule. There is probably more inventive genius exercised in designs for carpets than in any other branch of industry calling for new patterns.

There is much to study not only in costly but in cheap carpets of the dainty effects of contrasts, as in yellow and orange, with or without lighter colors; blue and lilac, scarlet and crimson, or white divided by faint blue. Carpets admit of demitints, but no shades. Ecru grounds are just now the most popular for the richer descriptions of carpets. The variety of patterns that are turned out allow of the carpets selected for the rooms of a house to represent the individual taste of the occupant, and thus on individual grounds creating pleasure in addition to the merits they may possess as agreeable compositions.

In the way of direction in choice of patterns, so far as colors are concerned, we would state that combinations of colors that would not be pleasing in a dress are unsuited for carpets and will never look well in a room. It is probably difficult to apportion out the pleasure derived from good carpets between the disposition of hues, the pattern itself, the material in reference to the mode in which it is worked up, and the general congruity of the carpet with its surroundings represented by walls, hangings and furniture. Proper selection manifestly involves high artistic taste and judgment. Decorators, who are experts, have taken up this matter of suitability, and their services can always be commanded. Landscape painters, whose constant study is one of harmonious blending and effective contrasts, are well qualified for the task. Tens of thousands of individuals, however, possess an innate perception of the truth of art without acquaintance with the principles that underlie it, and that afford the necessary means of judgment. Taste is more widely diffused than is generally surmised, and various influences are always at work to advance progress in taste.

Too much care cannot be exercised in choosing carpets with good-wearing colors. For this quality the guarantee of a reputable

house is fully sufficient. As to make, a close, fine web without pile will best stand rough usage. Kidderminster druggets, with their close set threads, are very serviceable and are largely used for summer seashore cottages. Brussels is extremely durable. Wilton pile will be chosen for its soft, yielding surface and bright appearance.

DESIGN FOR CARPET.

By Miss S. D. GILBERT.

THE ground deep chrome; the darkest scrolls Vandyke brown, slightly changed by a mingling of chrome; the intermediate shades formed by a union of the two colors, inclining more to the brown or chrome, as they are represented darker or lighter in the design. These two colors have the preference, as peculiarly rich in combination and effective for the drawing-room, particularly by gas-light; but others, as crimson and brown, or blue and pearl, may be used, by harmonizing the colors in the same manner.



DESIGN FOR AXMINSTER OR MOQUETTE CARPET. BY MISS S. D. GILBERT.

works depending on hand labor. No two pieces of cut glass, no two portions of pillow lace are precisely the same.

An invention is perfected for weighting more heavily, thus increasing the tension of the thread in the power loom, and securing a more even surface with a saving of material. In former times, when we were dependent on foreign productions, the market was supplied with much that was faulty, such as architectural scrolls, perspective views, flowers larger than nature, and various gaudy and meretricious effects. Now all this is changed. Where beauty is appreciated, art will not be confined to narrow limits; well balanced colors, with designs suited to the material, and attractive in themselves and assorting with their surroundings, are supplied.

Changes of fashion occur in carpets as in dress. Last year sombre and subdued colors and neutral tints prevailed; now brilliant tints and high contrasting colors are in the ascendant. The reaction in fashionable styles of carpets, however extreme, is usually traceable to long operating influences,